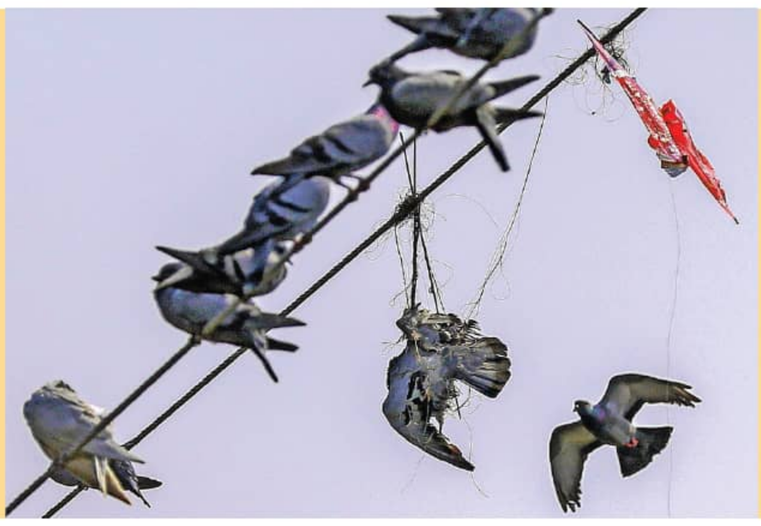
BENGALURU, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2026 www.Bangaloremirror.com 16 Pages PRICE ₹4

Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

TEMP Max 29 | Min 15 | Humidity 15% Clear sky | Sensex 83,580 | Nifty 25,693 | Gold 1,54,927 | Silver 2,46,337 | Dollar 90.54 | Euro 106.96 | GBP 123.23



SHARD TIMES

Rescuers, who still have their hands full nursing injured birds back to health, say state govt ban on glass-coated kite strings ineffective, demand stringent action

PAGE 5

MATCH MAKERS

Who, what, where, when: All you need to know about Men's T20 World Cup cricket tournament that kicks off today. Stay tuned as we bring you all the action

PAGE 11

One life lost every 5 days on Bengaluru–Mysuru Expressway, with second phase of Nidaghatta-Mysuru stretch being particularly deadly. Irony is nearly ₹78 lakh is collected per day as toll on this unsafe route

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

1,674 accidents claimed 215 lives in 3 years

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Built to provide fast connectivity between Bengaluru, the state capital, and Mysuru, Karnataka's cultural capital, the Bengaluru–Mysuru Expressway is increasingly under scrutiny as accident numbers remain worryingly high. Official data shows that in the three years since the expressway was opened, an average of more than 1.5 accidents have occurred every day, with one person losing their life roughly every five days. The figures have sparked concern that the high-speed corridor is failing to deliver on safety, even as traffic volumes and toll collections continue to rise.

The 118-km-long expressway has recorded 1,674 accidents over the last three years. These crashes have claimed 215 lives, which works out to about 72 deaths a year, or one fatality every five days on average. In addition, 311 people have suffered serious injuries, while over a thousand commuters have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

"The absence of dedicated trauma care centres along the highway has also contributed to fatalities, as accident victims often lose crucial time before reaching hospitals in Ramanagara or Mandya. Proposals to set up trauma care centres along the corridor have remained on paper for years

—Nagesh Gowda, civic activist

Don't play with fire

As 30 passengers have narrow escape in blaze, transport dept reiterates importance of complying with guidelines by Feb-end

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The narrow escape of 30 passengers after a private bus rammed into an electric pole and burst into flames on the Bengaluru–Tumakuru highway (NH-48) has once again highlighted the importance of implementation of all required safety compliances that long-distance bus operators have been ordered to put in place by end of February. This fire is the latest in a string of four such incidents between December 2025 and February 2026.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy told Bangalore Mirror that Friday's incident was due to rash driving, but soon after the tragic Chitradurga private bus fire that claimed several lives, the Transport Department had directed all sleeper bus operators to strictly implement eight mandatory safety measures, with full compliance required by the end of February.

A few weeks ago the Transport Minister convened a meeting with private bus owners, and urged that adherence to the new safety norms is non-negotiable and warned that strict action will be taken against those who fail to comply within the deadline.

Mandatory measures

The bus owners, who had attended the meeting, were instructed that all sleeper coach buses must remove driver partition doors and sliders fitted to sleeper berths,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Weekend bash

Known for his soulful vocals and heartfelt compositions, Gajendra Verma will be performing live, bringing a night of music, emotions, and memories.
Where: Orion Mall, Rajajinagar;
When: February 7, 6 pm

02 Puppet master

Atta Galatta is bringing a ventriloquism show and workshop by M Santhosh Kumar, who specialises in presenting Indian values and culture, blending humour and learning using the art of ventriloquism.
Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;
When: February 8, 4 pm

03 Tales of worship

Atta Galatta is bringing 'Divine Delicacies', a unique experience where samples of prasadams from various temples will be served along with stories of places of worship and the perceived food preferences of the divine.
Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;
When: February 8, 12.30 pm

04 Jazz in transit

Saxophonist and composer Tineke Postma will be bringing her quartet to Bengaluru with music from her latest album VOYA, a contemporary jazz project shaped by themes of journey, movement, and transformation.
Where: Windmills Craftworks, Whitefield;
When: February 7, 9.30 pm

05 Poetry realm

Shaam-e-Baazgasht offers an intimate, cosy, and immersive poetry experience drawn from a bilingual Hindi–English collection that journeys through unrequited love, longing, heartbreak, queerness, healing, and the quiet courage of letting go.
Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;
When: February 8, 5.30 pm

Silent toll of contaminated water

Persistent cases of water-borne illnesses reveal gaps in sanitation; experts say inadequate facilities and poor hygiene practices pose serious challenge to public health

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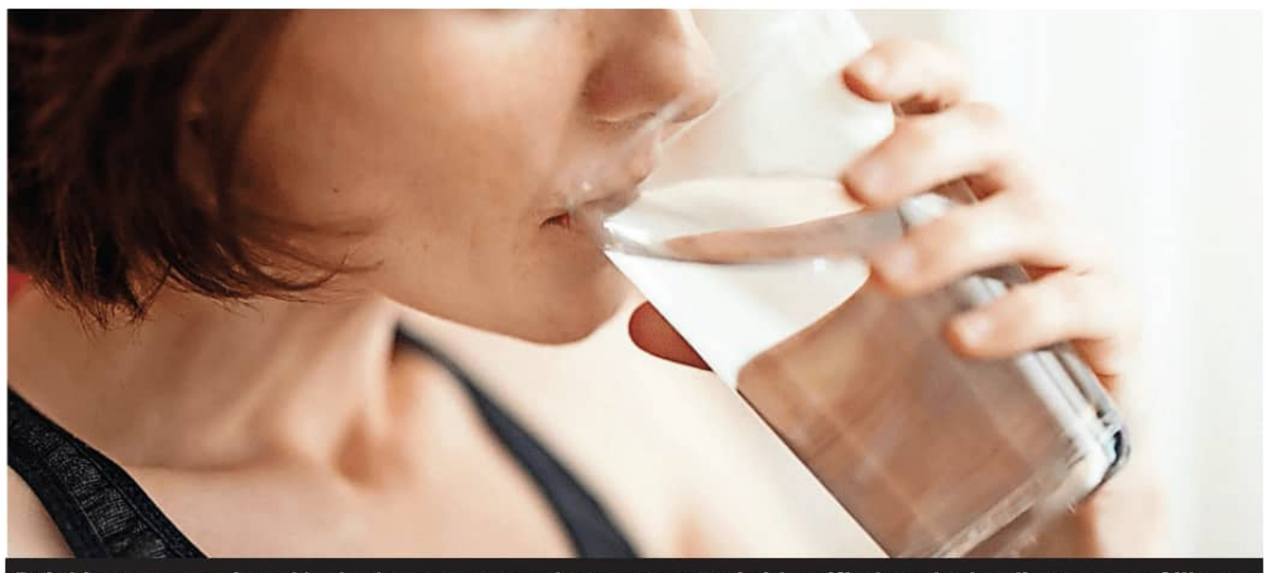

Drinking water tainted by leaks, sewage and poor storage is identified as the leading cause of illness

Karnataka reported over 1.82 lakh cases of Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases (ADD) in 2025, along with other water-borne infections recording thousands of cases, highlighting concerns around drinking water safety and sanitation across the state.

According to data from Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme - Integrated Health Information Platform (IDSPIHIP) portal, the state logged 1,82,665 ADD cases, the highest among all water-borne diseases reported from Karnataka in 2025. In addition to diarrhoeal diseases, Karnataka reported 39,348 cases of typhoid, 2,334 cases of leptospirosis, 1,005 cases of Hepatitis A, 63 cases of Hepatitis E, and 137 cases of cholera during the year 2025.

Govt's take

In response to the Rajya Sabha questions on the details of steps being taken to increase awareness about water purification methods among people to reduce incidences of water-borne disease, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare stated that they have issued Public Health Guidelines for Flood Events, outlining the common health impacts of floods and detailing disease surveillance during and after such events, with a focus on water- and food-borne illnesses, vector-borne diseases, and water and sanitation issues. In addition, it was highlighted that the ministry promotes awareness on preventing water-borne diseases and ensuring safe water practices through community engagement via Village Water and Sanitation Committees (Pani Samitis), regular water quality testing, sensitisation workshops, public campaigns on hygiene and sanitation, targeted interventions for vulnerable populations, and training programmes on safe water purification and handwashing, particularly in rural areas.

Doctor says essential measure for safe drinking water systems requires public supply chlorination, pipeline leak repairs and household boiling or filtering solutions

After a peak of 3,34,389 cases in 2021, ADD cases dropped sharply to 1,29,981 in 2022, then gradually increased to 1,39,760 in 2023. The burden rose further in 2024 to 1,83,777 cases and remained around the same level in 2025 with 1,82,665 cases, highlighting the persistent risk of diarrhoeal diseases linked to contaminated water and sanitation gaps.

Experts on root cause

Dr Aravinda SN, Lead Consultant - Internal Medicine, Aster RV Hospital, explained that a surge in ADD cases typically signals lapses in water, sanitation, hygiene, and food safety, often compounded by environmental and social factors. Contaminated drinking water from leaks, sewage, and poor storage is the main cause, he said, with monsoons and floods worsening the risk due to drain overflows and waterlogging. "The existence of inadequate sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices creates a crucial problem for public health. The combination of open defecation and toilet facilities that lack proper maintenance and the absence of handwashing with soap after toilet use and before meals and the presence of overcrowded housing enables diarrheal pathogens to spread among children," he said.

He explained that hot weather accelerates bacterial growth in food and water, while heavy rains intensify water pollution. As a result, summer and monsoon seasons see the most frequent spikes in cases.

Dr Prasanna KS, Consultant – Medical Gastroenterology, Manipal Hospital, opined that the rise in acute diarrhoea diseases in Karnataka can be linked to higher summer temperatures, contaminated water sources, increased travel and tourism, and large gatherings during festivals. "Crowded urban centres like Bengaluru and Mysuru are particularly vulnerable due to hygiene and sanitation challenges, while improved reporting has also contributed to the rise in detected cases," he said.

Cases over the years

Other water-borne diseases in Karnataka have shown notable fluctuations over the same period. Typhoid cases rose from 3,021 in 2021 to 29,232 in 2022, reaching 42,096 in 2023 and peaking at 45,641 in 2024, before slightly declining to 39,348 in 2025. Leptospirosis, linked to flooding and exposure to contaminated water, surged to 2,161 cases in 2022 and remained high with 2,382 in 2024 and 2,334 in 2025. Hepatitis A cases increased steadily, peaking at 1,285 in 2024 and slightly declining to 1,005 in 2025, while Hepatitis E and cholera cases remained lower but spiked occasionally, with cholera reaching 498 cases in 2024 before dropping to 137 in 2025.

"The most essential measure for establishing safe drinking water systems requires public water supply chlorination, pipeline leak repairs and household water boiling or filtering solutions," Dr Aravinda suggested.

No drugs for physios, OTs: NCAHP draws line

Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists are not authorised to prescribe medicines or offer allopathic treatment, the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) has clarified, seeking to clear confusion among patients and practitioners. Physiotherapists can work independently or as part of multidisciplinary teams but must hold at least a bachelor's degree.

In a public notice dated February 5, 2026, the Health Ministry-run body said both professions are regulated under the NCAHP Act, 2021, and must strictly operate within their defined scope of practice.

Physiotherapists fall under Category 3 of the Act and are permitted to provide preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitative and fitness-related care using physical modalities. Occupational Therapists, listed under Category 6, may deliver client-centred services aimed at improving participation through occupational engagement and environmental modification. **–BMB**

Experts to reform technical studies

The state government has issued an order constituting an expert committee to recommend reforms in the Department of Technical Education, including a possible reduction in seats for computer science courses. A 10-member committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Dr S Sadagopan, former Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

The committee has been tasked with reviewing the intake capacity of computer science and related courses, revising the curricula of core engineering programmes to align with current industry and employment needs, and suggesting incentive measures to attract students to engineering courses, along with other related aspects. **–BMB**

Cancer care approaches discussed at Manipal Hospital

Manipal Hospital Yelahanka organised a guided hospital visit and a round-table discussion with journalists to discuss current approaches to cancer diagnosis and treatment. The session focused on early detection, coordination among specialties, and continuity of care. Technologies such as PET-CT imaging and India's first Elekta LINAC with online adaptive planning were discussed in the context of their clinical application.

Doctors from multiple oncology specialties at the hospital shared perspectives on treatment and care coordination. Dr Prasad Narayanan, Lead

Consultant – Medical Oncology, Hemato-Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplant, said, "Precision oncology, immunotherapy, and structured protocols have dramatically improved remission rates and long-term survival, offering patients a renewed sense of hope." **–BMB**

Fraudster caught after 20 years on run

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday arrested a long-absconding accused in three bank fraud cases registered in Kolkata, bringing to an end a two-decade manhunt. The accused, identified as Krishnamurti Raghunath, was apprehended from Bengaluru following a coordinated operation.

According to the CBI, Raghunath, who was the then Branch Manager of Bharat Overseas Bank Ltd (now Indian Overseas Bank), Burrabazar Branch, allegedly used fake accounts to siphon off bank funds, causing a wrongful loss of approximately Rs 38.25 lakh to the bank.

CBI officials said the accused had been evading arrest since 2005. He was finally located and taken into custody in Bengaluru on February 5, 2026. **BMB**

Biker damages car in road rage incident

Road rage continues to plague Bengaluru's roads, with yet another incident of aggressive behaviour by a biker reported near Madavara Junction.

Aditya, a techie commuting from Nelamangala to Manyata Tech Park, alleged that a motorcyclist suddenly cut across his car, forcing him to brake abruptly. When Aditya slowed down, the biker reportedly stopped his vehicle in front of the car, confronted him, and damaged the car's side mirror. The accused also allegedly hurled abuses and issued threats before fleeing the spot.

The incident occurred within the limits of Madanayakanahalli Police Station. Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation. **BMB**

Passenger claims valuables stolen from bag

A 62-year-old woman has filed a complaint with the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Police, alleging that valuables including 790 grams of gold ornaments, diamond jewellery worth around Rs 8 lakh, medicines valued at Rs 20,000, and USD 200 in cash were stolen from her checked-in baggage during an international journey to the United States via Abu Dhabi.

Investigators have sought CCTV footage from airport authorities, issued notices to baggage screening and staging staff, and asked the airlines to provide details of personnel who handled the luggage. Further investigation is underway to identify those responsible. **BMB**

Nine face action over reckless two-wheeler stunts

In a special enforcement drive conducted on February 4 as part of Shab-e-Barat bandobast, the KR Puram Traffic Police booked nine two-wheeler riders for performing dangerous stunts on public roads, posing a risk to commuters.

According to the police, officers were deployed on patrol across key stretches within the station limits, including TC Palya Junction, Bhattarahalli Junction, Old Madras Road and Medahalli Bridge, areas that usually witness heavy traffic and late-night movement.

During the operation, the team detected nine riders performing a risky stunt where the front wheel of the motorcycle is lifted while in motion.

Police said all nine offenders were adults and were caught riding recklessly, endangering both themselves and other road users. The vehicles were seized on the spot and nine separate First Information Reports (FIRs) were registered against the riders. Legal action has been initiated under relevant sections of the Motor Vehicles Act and IPC.

Traffic police officials stated that such surprise checks will continue during festivals and weekends to curb stunt riding and ensure public safety. **BMB**

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Mule account network busted in cybercrime operation

On Friday, the Karnataka Cyber Command launched a major statewide crackdown, carrying out a massive operation against a network of 'mule herders' allegedly involved in supplying thousands of bank accounts for online fraud.

The coordinated drive led to the arrest of 12 key masterminds and the detection of over 42,000 mule accounts suspected to have been used for illegal financial transactions.

The operation, carried out simultaneously across more than 29 districts on February 5 and 6, resulted in 17 FIRs. During the raids, officers seized 25 ATM cards, 13 cheque books, 12 mobile phones and other incriminating materials.

Authorities confirmed that further searches are underway and additional FIRs and arrests are likely over the next two days. **BMB**

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Sikkim Darjeeling ₹47,000 - 71,000* 3 tour options 7 to 11 Days
Nainital ₹44,000 - 63,000* 6 tour options 6 to 9 Days
Leh Ladakh ₹44,000 - 68,000* 7 tour options 7 to 9 Days
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Bike taxi operations stir unease among auto drivers again

Auto, cab and goods vehicle drivers stage postcard protest at GPO, demanding Central Government action against bike taxis

Stating that bike taxis are causing serious difficulties for auto, car and goods vehicle drivers, the Indian Vehicles Driver Trade Union and the Snehajeevi Drivers Trade Union have launched a postcard campaign demanding that the Central Government intervene to provide much-needed relief from the menace of bike taxis.

Hundreds of drivers gathered in front of the General Post Office on Dr BR Ambedkar Veedhi to post letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi opposing the operation of bike taxis.

They said that the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 does not provide any clear or explicit permission for the operation of bike taxis, and that using two-wheelers, which lack essential safety mechanisms, for commercial passenger transport poses a serious threat to public safety. "Even accident statistics clearly show that the probability of accidents involving bike taxis is significantly higher," they said.

They pointed out that the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in several judgments, has clearly ruled that obtaining a licence is not a fundamental right. They further emphasised that the State Government has the authority to regulate transport systems in the interest of public welfare and public safety.

"Granting permission to bike taxis would not only endanger public safety and increase road accidents, but would also severely affect the livelihood of auto and taxi drivers who operate by following rules, holding valid licences and paying taxes. As a result, more than five lakh driver families in the state are likely to face economic hardship," the letter to the Prime Minister read.

File photo of a protest held by auto drivers at Freedom Park on December 29, 2022

The drivers' unions urged the Central Government to immediately intervene in the matter of bike taxis.

Meanwhile, Snehajeevi Santhosh Kumar, president of the Snehajeevi Drivers' Trade Union, said that the Minister for Transport had assured them two years ago that bike taxis would be stopped when auto, cab and goods vehicle drivers launched a massive protest. "The State Government formed a committee as per the High Court's direction. Though the committee opposed the operation of bike taxis, the Hon'ble High Court has directed the State Government to issue guidelines for bike taxis. If the State Government goes ahead with issuing these guidelines, lakhs of auto, cab and goods vehicle drivers will be affected," he said.

Meanwhile, Gandasi Sadananda Swamy, president of the Indian Vehicles Driver Trade Union, said that auto-rickshaw drivers cannot afford to approach the Supreme Court. "Around five lakh families are affected by the High Court's direction to the State Government to come out with guidelines for bike taxis. We appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct the State Government to take suitable action to end the menace of bike taxis," he said.

Letters highlight statutory silence, accident vulnerability, tax compliance disparities, predicting widespread distress among transport-dependent households

Bus operators must comply with 8 safety measures

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as these features can obstruct evacuation during accidents and fire emergencies. Side rails installed on seats in sleeper coaches must also be dismantled to allow passengers to exit quickly in emergencies.

According to a notice issued on January 21, operators were given one month to install Fire Detection and Suppression Systems (FDSS) in all sleeper coaches. In addition, every bus must be equipped with a minimum 10-kg fire extinguisher, particularly in the designated green zone, as recent incidents showed that the absence of adequate firefighting equipment led to greater loss of life and injuries.

Further, the notice explained that buses constructed with illegally extended chassis must be withdrawn from service immediately, as such alterations compromise vehicle stability and increase accident risks. Registrations will only be processed with approved Form 22 and 22A certification, along with detailed layout drawings indicating door locations, emergency exits, roof hatches, seating arrangements, and fire safety systems.

The accreditation and validity of bus body builders must also be verified at the time of registration. Unauthorised rooftop luggage carriers, which pose safety hazards, must be removed. Additionally, buses up to 12 metres in length must have at least four emergency exits, while those exceeding 12 metres must provide a minimum of five. Operators have been advised to ensure that all vehicle registration and fitness certificates remain valid and up to date.

Previous blazes

January 27: A private non-AC sleeper bus operated by Sri Annapurneshwari Travels was gutted in a fire near Suduru village in Hosanagara taluk. The bus, travelling from Hosanagara to Bengaluru, caught fire around 10.30 pm due to a suspected short-circuit in the Electronic Control Module behind the driver's seat. The driver quickly halted the vehicle, helping all 36 passengers escape. About 10–12 passengers sustained minor burns, and the bus was completely destroyed.

December 25: A fatal collision on NH-48 near Hiriyur in Karnataka's Chitradurga district resulted in a private sleeper bus catching fire, causing over 10 deaths and injuring 20+ passengers. The bus, traveling from Bengaluru to Gokarna, was struck by a container truck that crossed the divider, leading to a massive blaze around 2.30 am.

December 19: A KSRTC Swift bus travelling from Bengaluru-Kozhikode was completely gutted by fire near Hosahalli Gate, 30 km from Mysuru. All 44 passengers safely evacuated due to alert staff spotting smoke. Passengers lost luggage and documents; the cause is suspected to be a battery short circuit.

Friday's incident

According to police, the incident occurred between 1.30 am and 1:45 am near Hanumanthapura Gate in Nelamangala taluk when the driver allegedly fell asleep while driving due to which he lost control of the vehicle causing the bus veered off the road onto the footpath and came into contact with an electric pole. Sensing imminent danger, the driver, cleaner and passengers acted swiftly and evicted the passengers before the crash triggered a massive fire.

All 30 passengers onboard quickly evacuated the vehicle and escaped unhurt before the flames spread. Fire and emergency services from Nelamangala rushed to the spot, but the bus was completely gutted within minutes.

The vehicle, operated by Sanjana Tourist, was reduced to ashes, and passengers lost their luggage and personal belongings in the blaze. A case has been registered at the Nelamangala Rural Police Station, and further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact cause of the incident.

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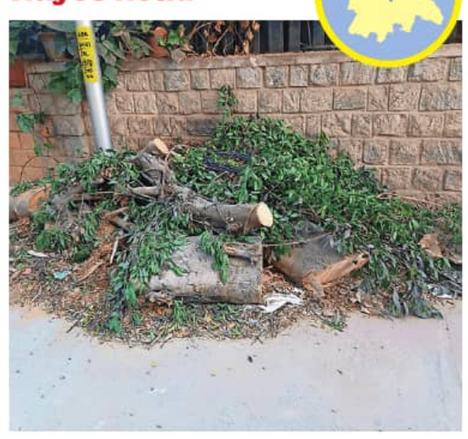
Open hazard
Dasarahalli Main Road

An open pit near Kodigehalli Gate on Dasarahalli Main Road, close to RMZ Latitude Residency, has remained unattended for two weeks, posing a serious danger and raising questions about BBMP accountability.

Garbage menace
Gollahalli

The garbage dump between Prestige Sunrise Park Norwood and Birchwood has been growing for over seven years, with only token annual clean-ups carried out despite repeated complaints.

Access blocked
Hayes Road



Hayes Road Cross remains neglected, with accumulated debris, no regular cleaning, and encroachment on the public car park, making entry and turning impossible.

Traffic offenders face mandatory classes before paying fines

Helmetless riding dominates traffic violations, police data shows

In an effort to strengthen road safety, traffic police are considering introducing a mandatory two-hour awareness class for errant riders before imposing fines for traffic violations. Sources said offenders will first be counselled on traffic rules, road discipline and the importance of wearing safety gear, after which penal action will be initiated. In serious or repeat cases, police may also recommend suspension or cancellation of driving licences to the Transport Department.

The move follows directions from the Supreme Court Road Safety Committee and comes amid alarming data showing helmet and seat belt violations topping the list of traffic offences. In Bengaluru alone, traffic police booked a staggering 69.88 lakh violation cases in 2025. Helmet violations accounted for the majority, with 20.33 lakh cases involving riders and 11.27 lakh cases involving pillion riders. Another 7.59 lakh cases were registered for not wearing seat belts.

Officials said accident fatalities are significantly higher in cases involving the absence of helmets and seat belts, prompting stricter enforcement measures. Along with fines, habitual offenders may face licence suspension or cancellation. Monthly compliance reports will also be submitted to the Director General of Police's office. Police believe the awareness-first approach will instil long-term discipline while ensuring strict action against repeat violators. —BMB

Despite ban, deadly manja continues to claim lives

Hundreds of birds injured as illegal kite strings remain rampant after Sankranti

Rescue centres report alarming manja-related injuries, warning that lack of enforcement turns festive kite flying into a deadly public safety crisis

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With Uttar Pradesh adopting a tough stance on the use of banned Chinese kite string, a growing chorus of animal welfare workers, wildlife rescuers and veterinarians in Bengaluru is urging the Karnataka government to introduce similarly stringent measures. They say Karnataka urgently needs stricter enforcement to curb the rampant use of Chinese manja, which continues to cause widespread harm.

Although the Karnataka government issued a notification in October 2024 banning Chinese manja and other harmful kite-flying threads, enforcement on the ground remains weak. As a result, the illegal string continues to be sold and used openly, leading to hundreds of birds and animals being injured or killed in Bengaluru every day.

"While the state government has imposed a ban, it has not been effective. Illegal kite strings are still being used rampantly, leading to injuries not just to birds and animals, but also to human beings. The Karnataka government should take a leaf out of Uttar Pradesh's book and bring in such a strict policy against the use of banned strings," said Dr (Colonel) Nawaz Shariff, Chief Veterinarian at PFA Wildlife Hospital.

The hospital says the aftermath of the Sankranti festival is still ongoing, with hundreds of injured birds rescued over the last month. Many of these birds suffer deep cuts, amputated wings and fatal bleeding caused by sharp manja threads entangled around their bodies.

> **The Karnataka government should take a leaf out of Uttar Pradesh's book and bring in such a strict policy against the use of banned strings**
>
> –Dr (Colonel) Nawaz Shariff, Chief Veterinarian, PFA Wildlife Hospital

A total ban on Chinese dor or manja and similar threads was imposed by the Karnataka government in 2016 as well. However, poor enforcement, lack of monitoring and limited public awareness have led to the continued use of this harmful thread, resulting in repeated loss of life. On January 5, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath cited public safety and said any death resulting from the use of banned kite-flying string should be treated as akin to murder.

The Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre, a city-based animal rescue centre, said it encountered 632 manjha-related injuries involving birds and animals in January 2026 alone. The centre said classifying manjha-related deaths as murder is not just welcome but necessary. "Manjha is no longer just a wildlife issue; it is a serious human safety crisis. In January alone, we tracked at least 14 human deaths, and the actual number is likely higher due to underreporting. The problem is not the absence of laws, but the failure to implement them. Clear enforcement mechanisms, defined accountability and compensation for victims would save both human lives and wildlife," said Subiksha Venkatesh, Lead Wildlife Rehabilitator at ARRC.

Metro fare row: CM blames union government

Blame game intensifies as Siddaramaiah links Bengaluru Metro fare hike to Central legislation and BJP inaction

Facing mounting anger from commuters and sharp criticism from opposition parties over the recent Bengaluru Metro fare hike, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday sought to distance the State government from the decision, asserting that Karnataka had no role in fixing the revised fares and placing responsibility squarely on the Union government.

In a strongly worded statement, the Chief Minister said the fare revision was mandated under a Central law and implemented strictly on the recommendations of an independent Fare Fixation Committee constituted by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. He emphasised that neither the State government nor the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited had any legal authority to modify, delay or reject the committee's recommendations.

"The people of Karnataka must know the truth and not be misled by political narratives," Siddaramaiah said while responding to commuter protests and sustained attacks from the BJP. While acknowledging the widespread anguish and concern expressed by metro users, he maintained that the revision was legally binding under the Metro Railways Operation and Maintenance Act, 2002.

Explaining the statutory process, the Chief Minister said the Fare Fixation Committee is headed by a former High Court judge and functions entirely within a Central framework. Its recommendations, once submitted, are mandatory for implementation by metro corporations across the country. "Attributing the fare revision to the Karnataka government is factually incorrect and deliberately misleading," he asserted.

As opposition parties accused the State government of burdening the common man, Siddaramaiah hit back, accusing Karnataka BJP leaders of failing to protect the State's interests at the national level. He questioned why BJP Members of Parliament and Union Ministers from Karnataka did not raise objections in Parliament or challenge the fare structure with the Union government.

"The Karnataka BJP is acting as a spokesperson for Delhi rather than standing with Bengalureans," he said, alleging that party leaders were more focused on pleasing the central leadership than addressing the hardships faced by daily commuters.

He said the government sympathised with commuters and would continue engaging stakeholders while pressing the Centre for relief and accountability in forthcoming policy discussions and reviews. —BMB

E-Vidhan project faces heat amid alleged cost surge talk

Sources claim reports prepared externally despite in-house capacity, comparisons raised with Parliament secretariat deployments, drawing scrutiny

Y Maheswara Reddy
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The corridors of Vidhana Soudha are abuzz with rumours over an alleged escalation in the cost of the much-delayed and widely publicised e-governance project under the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA). It is being rumoured that the cost of the e-governance project has escalated to over ₹350 crore and that a private agency has been roped in for its implementation.

Some employees and activists want to know what has caused the State Government to delay the implementation of NeVA, while other states, including Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, have successfully embraced it at an affordable cost. They have also questioned why a few leaders, who earlier raised a hue and cry over the decision to spend ₹254 crore on implementing the project through KEONICS via a private agency, are now silent.

It may be recalled that former MLC and advocate Ramesh Babu had filed a public interest litigation (PIL) in the Karnataka High Court, seeking a direction to the State Government to implement the e-governance project through NeVA instead of through a private agency selected by KEONICS at an estimated cost of ₹254 crore.

When contacted, Congress MLC Ramesh Babu said the PIL is still pending before the High Court. "My contention was that the conception of e-governance through NeVA is wrong. I am against it whether the cost is ₹254 crore or ₹350 crore," he said.

It is believed that a few officials wanted the project to be implemented through a private agency. It is alleged that a private agency has already been roped in to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) and that lakhs of rupees have been paid to it.

"There are around 60 engineers working at the computer centre in Vidhana Soudha. The authorities should have utilised their services for preparing the DPR. Another option was to replicate the project already implemented by the Parliament Secretariat and some State Assembly secretariats. Around ₹30 lakh to ₹40 lakh was spent on preparing the DPR through a private agency," said an employee on condition of anonymity.

Delays deepen as whispers cite private entry, soaring budgets, unanswered questions inside legislature halls

According to documents available with Bangalore Mirror, the then Leader of the Opposition, Siddaramaiah, wrote to the Additional Secretary, Finance Department, on December 9, 2020, advising against wasting taxpayers' money by engaging a private agency identified by KEONICS to implement NeVA at an estimated cost of ₹254 crore.

"The NIC-identified agency was to prepare the DPR at a cost of ₹60.84 crore. The two departmental proposals will be examined to prevent public fund wastage," the letter read.

A senior employee, requesting anonymity, said he was shocked to come across rumours about the escalation of the project cost. "I am at a loss to understand the logic behind the alleged approval of the project even though the cost has escalated by around ₹100 crore. I hope Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who earlier opposed the escalation of the project cost from ₹60.84 crore to ₹254 crore, will explain the approval of a project now estimated to cost over ₹350 crore," he said.

Assembly Secretary MK Vishalakshi said preparations for NeVA are under way, while Speaker UT Khader was unavailable for comment.

Ballots win, EVMs out in rural polls

The Karnataka Cabinet has cleared the Karnataka Grama Swaraj and Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2026, paving the way for the use of ballot papers instead of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in gram panchayat, taluk panchayat and zilla panchayat elections. The move mirrors a decision already taken for the five municipal corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), where the State Election Commission recently opted for ballots over EVMs.

The shift comes amid sustained scepticism within the Congress leadership over the reliability of EVMs and a surge in nationwide criticism following elections in Maharashtra and Bihar. Acting in line with the State Government's position, the election panel had earlier ruled out the use of EVMs for the Greater Bengaluru civic polls. The government has now extended the same logic to rural local body elections, formally deciding to abandon machines and return to paper ballots. **BMB**

AI watchdog to track fake news, hate posts

In a move aimed at safeguarding social harmony, the Karnataka government has approved an AI-based social media analytics system to monitor online content. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, with Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil saying the system will track fake news, communal and provocative posts, human trafficking-related content and other threats to law and order. Implemented under the Home Department, it will function across all 31 districts through dedicated monitoring units. The platform will analyse online content in real time, flag objectionable material, aid FIRs, detect hate speech early and identify posts by geography and local languages. **BMB**

Speeding, rash driving, poor lane discipline wreaking havoc

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sustained minor injuries. The numbers underline the growing human cost of a road designed for speed but still struggling with safety enforcement and emergency response.

Sources said that the highway was developed in two phases. The first phase runs from Bengaluru to Nidaghatta, while the second stretches from Nidaghatta to Mysuru. Accident data clearly shows that the second phase is far more dangerous. Over the three-year period, the Bengaluru–Nidaghatta stretch recorded 76 deaths, while the Nidaghatta–Mysuru section alone accounted for 145 fatalities. This means the second phase has seen a death roughly every seven to eight days. The Mandya district limits, which fall largely in this stretch, have emerged as the most accident-prone zone.

The first year of operation itself was particularly grim. In 2023, the highway recorded 110 deaths, averaging one fatality every three days. Of these, 33 deaths occurred on the Bengaluru–Nidaghatta stretch, while the remaining were reported on the Nidaghatta–Mysuru section. Following public criticism and repeated accidents, the police and the National Highways Authority of India introduced some corrective measures, including speed enforcement and improved signage.

Rising tolls

Even as accidents continue at an average of more than one per day, toll collection has surged. According to NHAI sources, Rs 855.79 crore has been collected from the expressway over the last three years, translating to nearly Rs 78 lakh per day. Vehicles travelling towards Mysuru pay toll at the Kaniminike plaza, which has collected Rs 282.14 crore in three years, averaging about Rs 26 lakh per day. Vehicles heading towards Bengaluru pay at the Sheshagirihalli toll plaza near Bidadi, which has generated Rs 248.42 crore, or around Rs 23 lakh per day. The Ganangur toll plaza on the Nidaghatta–Mysuru stretch has collected Rs 325.23 crore, averaging close to Rs 30 lakh per day.

Experts attribute the steady accident rate mainly to speeding, rash driving and poor lane discipline. "The absence of dedicated trauma care centres along the highway has also contributed to fatalities, as accident victims often lose crucial time before reaching hospitals in Ramanagara or Mandya. Proposals to set up trauma care centres along the corridor have remained on paper for years," said Nagesh Gowda, a civic activist.

While fatalities have reduced slightly, with 54 deaths reported in 2024 and 51 deaths recorded till October 2025, safety experts warn that the highway cannot be considered safe as long as it continues to witness more than one accident every day.

Delayed UKTL project finally powers up

The Udupi–Kasaragod Transmission Line (UKTL), a key power project aimed at strengthening the southern grid, is nearing completion and is expected to earn Karnataka about ₹2,500 crore through electricity sales. Conceived as part of the inter-State transmission system, the 400 kV line will help evacuate surplus power from the State and draw electricity during shortages, improving grid stability and reducing transmission losses. The project, approved by the Centre in 2021, entails a total cost of around ₹12,000 crore.

While Kerala progressed smoothly, the Karnataka stretch faced delays due to land issues and forest clearances. With hurdles cleared, the UKTL is expected to ease congestion and aid renewable energy integration. **BMB**

Budget 2026 fuels realty expansion beyond metro cities

Real estate experts welcome infrastructure push and capital reforms, but flag absence of strong measures for affordable housing segment

The Union Budget 2026-27 has sparked mixed reactions from the real estate sector, with experts welcoming long-term growth measures but lamenting the lack of direct support for affordable housing. Navin Dhanuka, Director at ArisUnitern, said, "The Union Budget 2026 marks a clear shift from short-term cyclical support to building a durable growth backbone for Indian real estate. By widening the geographical footprint of cities, the Budget enables housing growth beyond saturated urban cores into well-connected peripheral and Tier-2 markets." He added that reforms like deepening capital markets through REITs and municipal bonds would strengthen buyer confidence and reduce execution risk.

Bhavesh Kothari, Founder & CEO of Property First Realty, echoed this, highlighting the focus on infrastructure and urban connectivity. "Enhanced connectivity through seven proposed high-speed rail corridors, 20 new national waterways, and the Infrastructure Risk Guarantee Fund should accelerate execution while improving private sector participation," he said. Kothari noted the ₹5,000 crore annual allocation for City Economic Regions and emphasis on Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities would ease pressure on metros and unlock housing demand in new corridors.

Tier two and three cities emerge as housing growth engines

Sustainable growth

Monty Joshi, Co-Founder of Sarvam Properties, added that the Budget's thrust on decentralised industrial development and green urbanisation supports a geographically diverse, end-user-driven housing demand. "Capital access via REITs/ municipal bonds, GST simplification, and faster approvals cut execution risks and costs," he said. Ajmera Realty & Infra India CFO Nitin Bavisi welcomed reforms like REITs for CPSE assets, risk-mitigation support for lenders, and TDS rationalisation for NRIs, saying, "These measures will unlock institutional capital and enhance funding access for developers. The ₹5,000 crore allocation for Tier II and III cities serves as a strong catalyst for housing-led growth beyond metros."

Mixed reactions

ANAROCK Chairman Anuj Puri pointed out that while the Budget acts as a growth catalyst, it disappoints the affordable housing segment. "Sales share of affordable housing has fallen from over 38% in 2019 to around 18% in 2025. The sector needed high-impact measures," he said. Puri noted the increase in public capital expenditure to ₹12.2 lakh crore, dedicated REITs for CPSE assets, incentives for sustainable construction, and high-speed corridors as positive steps that will support long-term real estate development across Tier-1, 2, and 3 cities. **–BMB**

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Hosakerehalli draws luxury home buyers

Demand for luxury apartments near Hosakerehalli is witnessing steady growth as Bengaluru homebuyers increasingly seek premium homes in well-established residential pockets. The area's calm surroundings, improving infrastructure, and strong connectivity to key city corridors are making it a preferred destination for affluent buyers.

A recent homebuyer said Hosakerehalli offers a peaceful environment without compromising access to workplaces, schools, or social infrastructure. Developers report sustained interest in spacious layouts, contemporary architecture, and lifestyle amenities including clubhouses, landscaped gardens, fitness centres, and advanced security systems. Another buyer said their family wanted a high-end home offering privacy, space, and long-term value, and Hosakerehalli matched those expectations. With limited land availability and rising demand. **–BMB**

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

STONE-CARVED BLOOM

Our reader shares a striking image of the Artemisia flower, who's sculpted, stone-like appearance challenges the idea that all blooms must be delicate and colourful. Pollinated by the wind rather than bees, the flower releases a subtle camphor-like aroma, while its rugged form brings visual contrast to gardens dominated by fragile blossoms—also valued for its medicinal and narcotic properties.

The picture was clicked by reader **N Sampat Kumari**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

BDA plans graded penalty cut for vacant sites citywide

Poor compliance forces rethink as smaller plots get lower penalties to push construction and curb speculation across the city

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) is weighing a downward revision of penalties imposed on allottees who have kept their residential sites vacant for years, after acknowledging that the existing flat-rate penalty system has failed to yield results. The issue came up at a recent governing council meeting, where officials admitted that the current 10% penalty linked to prevailing guidance values has not encouraged site owners to either pay the levy or begin construction. Many beneficiaries, they said, have simply ignored the demand notices, prompting the authority to explore a more realistic and graded structure.

Under the proposed framework, beneficiaries who construct houses within five years of allotment may be allowed to pay a reduced penalty instead of the uniform 10% charge. Penalties are likely to be rationalised based on plot size, with smaller sites attracting lower rates. For instance, a 20×30 site may draw a penalty of about 2.5%, a 30×40 site around 5%, a 40×60 site approximately 7.5%, while larger 50×80 sites could continue to attract a 10% levy. Officials said the calculation may also factor in guidance values applicable at the time of construction, along with interest.

A similar 10% penalty was extended in September 2024 even to allottees holding absolute ownership rights, but compliance remained negligible. This poor response, officials said, has underscored the need for a more practical approach that distinguishes between speculative investors and genuine allottees who intend to build homes.

Preventing hoarding of residential plots remains a key objective for the authority. The BDA acquired land from farmers, developed layouts with basic infrastructure, and

BDA may replace flat ten percent levy with size-linked charges, hoping owners regularise properties and build on nearly 68,000 vacant plots spread across Bengaluru layouts after years idle and disputes

allotted sites at subsidised rates to address the city's housing demand. However, a section of beneficiaries has treated these plots purely as long-term investments, leaving them vacant for decades. Such sites often become dumping grounds, attract encroachments and anti-social activities, and pose law-and-order challenges.

According to BDA estimates, nearly 68,000 sites across 64 layouts in Bengaluru remain vacant, with over 20,000 tied up in litigation. Except for the recently developed Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout and Arkavathy Layout, vacant sites are found in almost all major BDA layouts, including Jayanagar, Banashankari, Anjanapura, HAL, HBR Layout, JP Nagar, Nagarabhavi, Koramangala and Indiranagar. While construction deadlines have gradually been relaxed from two years to three and now five years, enforcement has been inconsistent. Although the law permits resumption of sites after deducting 12.5% of the allotment amount, violations often surface only during regularisation or sale, officials admitted. — BMB

DID YOU KNOW?

Seventy-five years ago, drawing immense power from the heavens existed largely in the realm of science fiction, envisioned by futurists such as Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov. This week, Elon Musk's reported mega-merger of xAI and SpaceX has revived that long-speculative idea, pushing space-based data centres closer to engineering reality. For nearly two decades, NASA engineers have explored shifting energy-intensive computing off Earth, where solar power is abundant and physical space is virtually unlimited. More recently, major technology players such as Alphabet and Blue Origin have shown interest in similar concepts. Musk argues that long-term AI growth will eventually require space-based infrastructure. With a vast launch fleet, satellite networks, and AI platforms under one umbrella, he is pursuing an integrated ecosystem that could fundamentally reshape where and how the world's most powerful computers operate. If realised, such systems could also reduce pressure on terrestrial energy grids and open an entirely new frontier for digital infrastructure development. However formidable challenges in cost, maintenance, radiation protection, and orbital regulation will determine whether the vision becomes practical or remains an ambitious experiment for future generations of technologists worldwide today. — Reuters

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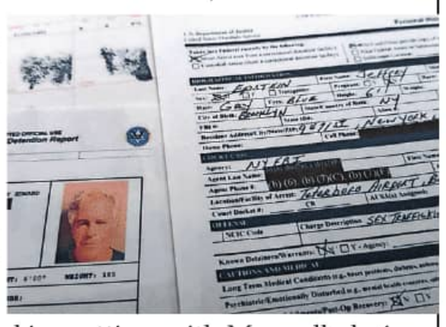
Images of NYC mayor with Epstein are AI-generated. Here's how we know

THE CLAIM: Images show Mayor Zohran Mamdani as a child with his mother alongside Jeffrey Epstein and powerful figures, implying secret family ties and criminal associations across social media this week widely.

FACT: The images are AI-generated, watermarked, traced to parody accounts, and contradict real timelines, family histories, and verified reporting about all individuals involved, showing no factual basis for the claims whatsoever.

Multiple AI-generated images falsely portraying New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani as a child alongside his mother, filmmaker Mira Nair, with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein and his associate Ghislaine Maxwell, have been widely shared on social media, despite clear indicators that the visuals are fabricated. The manipulated images began circulating Monday on X from an account openly labelled as parody and self-described as an "AI-powered meme engine." Each image carries visible AI watermarks and contains inconsistencies that undermine their credibility.

Several of the images depict Mamdani appearing as a young child or baby positioned near Epstein, Maxwell, former US President Bill Clinton, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates. In one version, Mamdani and Nair appear at the front of a nighttime group photograph on a busy street. Others place the same figures in a tropical-looking setting, with Maxwell placing her arm around Mamdani and Epstein holding Clinton. Additional images show Nair holding Mamdani as an infant while posing with Epstein and others. Verification using Google's Gemini app detected SynthID, a digital watermarking technology used to identify AI-generated or AI-edited content in all the circulating images, confirming they were created or altered using Google's AI models.



The account that first posted the visuals later appeared to acknowledge responsibility, writing: "I purposely made him a baby which would technically make this pic 34 years old. Yikes." The images surfaced shortly after media reports highlighted an email from publicist Peggy Siegal to Epstein, in which she mentioned seeing various prominent figures, including Clinton, Bezos and Nair, at a 2009 film afterparty hosted at Maxwell's townhouse. However, Mamdani was 18 years old in 2009, making the depictions of him as an infant or small child impossible.

The fabricated images have fuelled additional false claims online, including assertions that Epstein was Mamdani's father. In reality, Mamdani's father is Mahmood Mamdani, a respected anthropology professor at Columbia University. Another falsehood suggests Nair was previously married to an Epstein relative. Her former husband is photographer Mitch Epstein, and no evidence exists of any familial link to Jeffrey Epstein. None of Epstein's known victims have publicly accused Clinton, Gates or Bezos of involvement in his crimes. The NYC Mayor's Office did not respond to a request for comment, while a representative for Mitch Epstein declined to comment. The episode underscores how AI-generated misinformation can rapidly spread online and why visible watermarks, source checks and basic timeline verification remain essential. — AP

Who's guilty when a drone lands?

The Karnataka High Court has stayed further police investigation in a case that raises an unusual legal question — whether an unmanned aerial vehicle can be accused of committing criminal trespass.

The case came up before Justice M Nagaprasanna, who orally questioned the very basis of the FIR, asking, "Can a drone commit criminal trespass?" The Court noted that criminal law is ordinarily invoked against human actors, not inanimate objects, and said the issue required serious examination.

The proceedings arose from an FIR registered by the Doddaballapur Rural Police after a research drone developed by a Bengaluru-based aerospace company landed on private land during a test flight. The police invoked provisions relating to rash conduct and criminal trespass, prompting the company to approach the High Court seeking quashing of the case.

During the hearing, the Court observed that the FIR appeared to proceed on assumptions rather than facts. It noted that there was no allegation of any person physically entering the property and remarked that "there is no whisper in the complaint as to who committed the trespass." The Court added that attributing criminal intent to a machine raises serious legal concerns.

The petitioner company submitted that the drone was being tested under a valid licence issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and that the flight took place in a designated green zone. According to the company, the drone suffered a technical malfunction and made an emergency landing on adjacent land without causing any damage or injury.

IN HIGH COURT

The Court also took note of the submission that no complaint was lodged by the landowner and that the police had registered the FIR on their own. Questioning this approach, the judge remarked that "criminal law cannot be set in motion on presumptions".

The State defended the registration of the FIR by referring to local circumstances surrounding the recovery of the drone. However, the Court pointed out that such justifications did not find mention in the FIR itself and observed that "what is not stated in the FIR cannot later be improved by explanation".

Finding merit in the company's challenge, the High Court stayed further investigation in the matter and directed the investigating officer to file an affidavit responding to the allegations raised by the petitioner. The Court cautioned that failure to do so would invite consequences.

The matter will be taken up for further hearing after the State places its response on record.

— BMB

Metro alignment not in court's purview

The Karnataka High Court has clarified that it will not examine whether the alignment chosen for a metro rail line is correct or optimal, holding that such decisions fall within the domain of specialised urban transport authorities.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation filed by a residents' association opposing a change in the alignment of a proposed metro line near Nagarbhavi in Bengaluru. The petitioners argued that deviating from the originally planned route along the Outer Ring Road would result in large-scale tree felling and the demolition of homes and commercial establishments, causing environmental and economic damage.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Poonacha declined to examine the route change, observing that metro alignments involve technical planning judgments beyond judicial scrutiny and must be left to the authorities.

However, acknowledging the environmental concerns, the court directed the State government and BMRCL to consider the impact assessment and other material submitted by the residents' association while finalising or implementing the project.

The petition challenged the shift in alignment from the Dwaraka Nagar–Chowdeshwari Nagar corridor along the Outer Ring Road to a route via Nagarbhavi Circle and Summanhalli Cross. Disposing of the case, the High Court reiterated that courts would not interfere in policy or technical matters unless there is clear illegality or statutory violation.

— BMB

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Laxmi Vakkund, R/o: #111, 3CC Kasturi Nagar Bengaluru have changed my name to Laxmi Shrikant Vakkund, will use it for all future purposes.

I, Asma Begum W/O Sadiq Ahmed R/O #12, MM Lyt, KB Sandra, Banglore-32 have changed my name to Asma Sultana for all Purposes.

I, LEELAVATHI J, W/o R.Rajanikanth, R/at No. 105-E, 2nd Floor, 5th Main road, Padma Upadhyaya Layout, near Seva Smart, Nagadevana halli, Bangalore-560056 have changed my name to LEELARAJANIKANTH, vide affidavit dt: 04.02.2026 before notary Devaraja E, Bengaluru.

I, IMTIAZ (Old Name) resident at No. 11, 1st Main Road, Anand Giri Layout, Shanbhoganahalli, 4th Cross, Bannerghatta, Bengaluru-560083 have changed my name to IMTIAZ PASHA (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 5/2/2026 Before Notary DEEPA.M Bangalore.

I, JACINTHA MARY ANTHONY D/o Benny Anthony Dass R/at No. 110 18th Main 7th Cross BTM EWS Layout Bengaluru -560076 have changed my name to JECINTA MARY ANTHONY vide affidavit dated: 6/2/2026 Before Notary K.V.Mani Bangalore.

I, PAVITRA SHRIPAD HEGDE Residing at No. 202, 2nd floor, Jeya crystal apartment, opp to federal Bank, vignan nagar, Bangalore 560037 have changed my name to PAVITRA HEGDE vide affidavit dated: 6/2/2026 Before Notary K.V.Mani Bangalore.

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I, Ashwini.V W/o Arun.K R/o No 1758,8th Block,near Aragas Grand,S.M.V.layout, Viswaneedam Post,B'luru 560091 have changed my name to Ashwini Arun .

I, Chandashekara Srinivasa S/o Srinivasa, R/o No. 38, 3rd Floor, 3rd Cross, 9th Main, Seetharamaiah Layout, Vidyaranyapura Post, B'luru-560097 have changed my name to S Chandrashekar.

I, ZAREENA (Old Name) W/o Jagirdar Khan resident at No. 8/1, 11th B' Cross, Hosahalli Main Road, Padarayanapura, Bengaluru-560026 have changed my name to ZAREENA KHANUM (New Name) vide affidavit dated: 5/2/2026 Before Notary DEEPA.M Bangalore.

I, Karthik Raj Vinayakam S/o Vinayagam Subbara R/o No C-129, D D T T Ltd Industrial Suburb, Yeswanthpur Post, Bengaluru - 560 022. Have Changed My Name to Karthik Raj Vinayagam for All Purposes.

MITI, D/O Ram Padarath Sharma, R/O 206, Adithya Arena, Owners Court, Bangalore – 560035, have changed my name from Miti to Miti Sharma.

WE, Vinit A Jain and Payal Jain R/o 2142, Prestige West Woods, Bangalore 560023 have changed our daughter name from Paridhi Jain to Praavi Jain, vide affidavit date 3.2.2026 sworn before Natesh D.

I, Madhuchandra Jagannatharao Sinde S/o Jagannatha Rao Sindhe R/o #23, Krishna Temple Rd, Vidyaranyapura Post, B'luru-560097 have changed my name to Madhu Chandra Jagannatha Rao Sindhe.

I, Abdul Sattar Qasimi, s/o Manfath Ali, R/o No-77 4th Cross 1st Main Road R B I Colony Jayanagar 3rd Block East Bengaluru-560041 have changed my name to Abdul Sattar Qasmi for all Purposes.

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ಕಡಿಮೆ ದರ
ಬುಕಿಂಗ್ 7, 8ನೇ ಫೆಬ್ರವರಿ 2026

ಈ ಕೊಡುಗೆ 2 ದಿನಗಳು ಮಾತ್ರ

ಕಾಶಿ, ಗಯಾ, ಅಯೋಧ್ಯಾ 6 ರಾತ್ರಿ ₹ 29,000/-	ಅಂಡಮಾನ್ 6 ರಾತ್ರಿ ₹ 27,000/-
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ಮೇ 5, 10, 15 ರಂದು ಗ್ರೂಪ್ ಪ್ರವಾಸವನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.
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ದಿನಾಂಕ 06-02-2026 ರಿಂದ 12-02-2026 ರವರಗೆ
ಸಮಯ : ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 10.00 ರಿಂದ ಮಧ್ಯಾಹ್ನ 2.00 ರವರೆಗೆ
ಶೇಷಾದ್ರಿಪುರಂ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ

ಮಂಡಿ ನೋವು, ಬೆನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ಕತ್ತು ನೋವು, ಕೀಲು ನೋವು, ಭುಜದ ನೋವು, ಲಕ್ವ, ಹಿಮ್ಮಡಿ ನೋವು, ಟೆನ್ನಿಸ್ ಎಲ್ಬೋ ನೋವು, ತಲೆನೋವು, ಮೈಗ್ರೇನ್, ಚಿಕನ್‌ಗುನ್ಯದಿಂದ ಉಂಟಾಗುವ ಕೀಲು ನೋವು, ರುಮಟಾಯ್ಡ್ ಆರ್ಥ್ರೈಟಿಸ್ (ಸಂಧಿವಾತ), ವೆರಿಕೋಸ್ ವೇಯನ್ಸ್ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆ, ಕಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಊತ ಹಾಗೂ ರಕ್ತ ಚಲನೆ ಇಲ್ಲದವರಿಗೆ, ಸೊಂಟ ಮತ್ತು ಕಾಲುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಕಳೆದುಕೊಂಡವರಿಗೆ, ಸಯಾಟಿಕಾ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿವಿಧ ಮೂಳೆ ನೋವುಗಳಿಗೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ರೀತಿಯ ಔಷಧಿ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ಮತ್ತು ಯಾವುದೇ ಶಸ್ತ್ರ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ಇಲ್ಲದೆ ವಿಶೇಷ ಹೈಡ್ರೋ ಥೆರಪಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಮಸಾಜ್ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನೀಡಲಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

SP ಸೆಲೆಬ್ರಿಟಿ ವೆಲ್ನೆಸ್ಸ್ (ರಿ) 9739986737

ವಿಳಾಸ : ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ ಹೋಟೆಲ್ ಹತ್ತಿರ , ಕುಮಾರ ಕೇನೊ ಅಪಾರ್ಟ್ಮೆಂಟ್ ಎದುರು, ಶೇಷಾದ್ರಿಪುರಂ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು–20

Cricket fans are in for treat as Men's T20 World Cup begins today

LET THE CRICKET CLASH COMMENCE

SS Shreekumar
mybangaloremirror
@timesofindia.com

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A month-long cricket feast awaits cricket lovers as the slam-bang Men's T20 World Cup cricket tournament comes calling and will be hosted jointly by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8, 2026.

After winning the inaugural tournament in 2007, India had to wait until 2024 to win it for the second time. The defending champions will also be hosting it for only the second time as the tournament expands from the original 12 to 20 teams from the last edition.

Images of India skipper Rohit Sharma walking up gingerly to receive the winners' trophy at the presentation in the West Indies occupies a lot of space in the tournament promos and advertisements. Of course, Rohit Sharma has called it a day from this format. The highest run-getter of the tournament, India's Virat Kohli has also announced his retirement from the shortest format. Virat Kohli has scored 1,292 runs in T20 World Cup matches.

The absence of these two will be keenly felt, no doubt. Yet, the Indian team now consists of many players who are capable of delivering the coup de grace and lift the trophy again.

Led by Suryakumar Yadav, it has Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya and Rinku Singh waiting to hoist the ball to all parts of the park. Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Varun Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar are more than capable of taking wickets and also contribute with the bat if needed.

India will be playing its first match in the tournament against USA in Wankhede Stadium today

Jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka, Men's T20 World Cup cricket tournament will be held from February 7 to March 8

The tournament will witness a total of 55 matches in all. The 20 teams in the fray include the two hosts, six of the top seven teams from the 2024 edition, four of the highest-ranked ICC teams that missed direct qualification and eight other teams determined through regional qualifiers.

There is hardly any major cricket event which does not generate controversy even before the first ball is bowled. The BCCI instructed the IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders to release Bangladesh pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman as relations between Bangladesh and India continued to be on the boil for various reasons.

The decision led to Bangladesh deciding to boycott the tournament. The ICC promptly replaced them with Scotland. Italy has qualified for the first time. Supporting Bangladesh is the Pakistan Cricket Board which has announced its decision not to play against India in Colombo on February 15, 2026, and also to wear black badges in protest. How much they will carry out the threat is anybody's guess.

Be that as it may, the 20 teams have been divided into four groups of five each with the top two advancing to the Super 8 stage. India are in Group A with Namibia, Netherlands, Pakistan and the United States. The traditional cricket nations like Australia, England, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and South Africa along with India should figure in the Super 8. The once-famous West Indies are in a rebuilding process while Pakistan's stance clouds their presence with uncertainty.

Coming as it does just before the IPL 2026 season, the T20 World Cup will provide a splendid opportunity to all the players — Indian and foreign — to get into top form and continue to shine. Cricket fans are thus in for a double-delight within the next three months between the T20 World Cup and the IPL 2026.

Bengaluru misses out

It is a great pity that none of the matches will be held in Bengaluru. The M Chinnaswamy Stadium has hosted many important T20 and ODI World Cup matches in the past. But the stampede which claimed the lives of 11 people and injured many when thousands gathered to celebrate RCB's maiden IPL success last year has seen the Karnataka government deny permission to host any major cricket event until the recommendations for improvement in various aspects of crowd control and regulation are adopted by the franchisee and the KSCA.

Surprisingly, no Karnataka player is in the Indian T20 World Cup squad either.

Today's match

Pakistan	V/S	Netherlands
11.00 am		
West Indies	V/S	Scotland
03.00 pm		
India	V/S	USA
07.00 pm		

Suryakumar Yadav confident as India marches on to defend reigning title

India captain Suryakumar Yadav said that the Indian team would be flying to Colombo for the group stage game against Pakistan, even though their arch-rivals have announced they would be boycotting the game.

"We have not refused to play against Pakistan. They have refused. Our flights for Colombo for the Pakistan game are booked," Suryakumar Yadav said at a press conference.

"First we will play in Mumbai, then head to Delhi and then travel to Colombo," he added.

India begin their campaign against USA on February 7 and then have the game against Pakistan on February 15 in Colombo.

This comes on the heels of a massive controversy with Bangladesh being ejected from the T20 World Cup just weeks before the start of the event for refusing to play games in India. Pakistan, in the aftermath of Bangladesh's ouster, refused to play against India in a group stage game that was to be played in Sri Lanka.

Speaking on the Indian team, Suryakumar Yadav said, "Good headache to have. It can get difficult to pick a XI. But you have to keep the team ahead and pick the best XI. The way we have been playing, it looks like that (the pressure is on us). I am very relieved to get my form back. Good to be back among the runs before a big tournament."

Suryakumar Yadav during the practice sessions held at Wankhede Stadium on Friday

"It has been a wonderful journey with coach Gautam Gambhir. The atmosphere he has created in the team, he has tried to infuse a culture of playing for the team and not personal milestones. The dressing room atmosphere is very light. We have been playing a good brand of cricket. We played bilateral and ICC events with a different mindset earlier. But for the last 12 months, we have tried to play with the same mindset," he said.

"The game is actually moving fast. It is harsh on bowlers. I am happy that I am a batter. I feel for my bowlers," he said, while commenting about the scoring rates in T20 cricket.

About Washington Sundar, he said, "Tilak Varma got a break, didn't play NZ series, he looked a different player when he came back. We spoke to Washington Sundar, he is almost there. We are willing to be patient with him."

"Dew is not controllable. We will control what we can control. We are doing well, batting first and chasing. We will take a call on the big matches. We have played a lot of matches when there is dew. We should look to ignore that factor," he said about the dew factor. **–BMB**

HIGHLIGHTS

Indian squad for T20 World Cup

Suryakumar Yadav (Captain), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Harshit Rana, Varun Chakravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Rinku Singh.

T20 World Cup 2026 venues

In India
New Delhi – Arun Jaitley Stadium
Kolkata – Eden Gardens
Mumbai – Wankhede Stadium
Ahmedabad – Narendra Modi Stadium
Chennai – MA Chidambaram Stadium

In Sri Lanka
Colombo – Premadasa Stadium and Sinhalese Sports Club ground
Kandy – Pallekele Cricket Stadium

Groups and format

Group stage
The Group stage will be played from February 7 to 20, 2026. The 20 teams are divided into four groups of five with each team facing the other in the group and will have a total of 40 matches.

Group A: India, Namibia, Netherlands, Pakistan, United States.

India matches
Feb 7, 2026 Vs USA, Wankhede Stadium.
Feb 12, 2026, Vs Namibia, Arun Jaitley Stadium.
Feb 15, 2026, Vs Pakistan, Premadasa Stadium (Colombo)
Feb 18, 2026 Vs Netherlands, Narendra Modi Stadium.

Group B: Australia, Ireland, Oman, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe
Group C: England, Italy, Nepal, Scotland, West Indies
Group D: Afghanistan, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, UAE

Super 8 stage
The top two teams from each group will advance to the Super 8 stage. They will be divided into two groups of four teams each. In the Super 8 stage, each team will play the others in the respective group in a round-robin format, with the top two teams from each group advancing to the semifinals. Points will not be carried over from the group stage to the Super 8 stage.

Knockout stage
First semi-final: March 4, 2026, Eden Gardens or Premadasa Stadium
Second semi-final: March 5, 2026, Wankhede Stadium
Final: March 8, 2026, Narendra Modi Stadium.

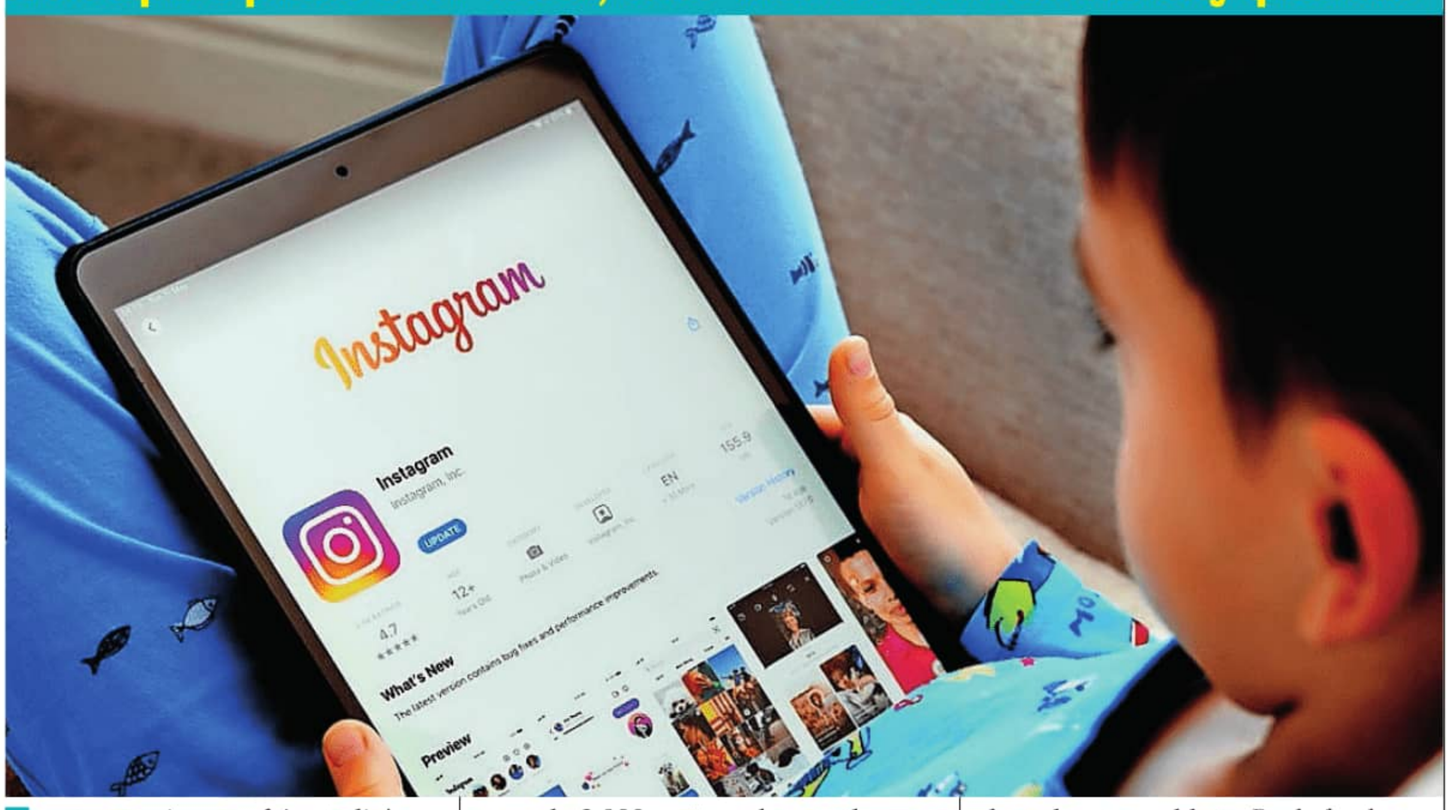
T20 World Cup history

2007 – India bt Pakistan
2009 – Pakistan bt Sri Lanka
2010 – England bt Australia
2012 – West Indies bt Sri Lanka
2014 – Sri Lanka bt India
2016 – West Indies bt England
2021 – Australia bt New Zealand
2022 – England bt Pakistan
2024 – India bt South Africa

(Earlier it was held in odd years. But from 2010, it is being held in even years)

HOW INSTAGRAM HAS CHANGED OVER DECADE

From square photos to AI-driven, video-first feeds and authenticity questions



Instagram is one of Australia's most widely used social media platforms, with almost two in three Australians holding an account. Over the past decade, however, the platform has undergone a quiet but profound transformation. From the way images are framed to the kinds of media that dominate feeds, and from user behaviour to algorithmic decision-making, Instagram today bears little resemblance to the app many first encountered in the mid-2010s.

The platform's leadership has acknowledged what many users already sense: feeds are becoming cluttered with what critics describe as "synthetic everything" — AI-generated images, videos, and text that often feel repetitive or hollow. In response, Instagram has signalled that its algorithms may be adjusted to surface more original, human-made content. This potential shift is the latest chapter in a long story of evolution that has reshaped how people create, consume, and interpret online media.

To better understand these changes, I examined ten years' worth of posts from a single Australian news account, analysing nearly 2,000 posts and more than 5,000 individual media assets. While user practices differ widely, this longitudinal snapshot offers a useful lens into broader platform-level patterns and the direction social media may be heading.

From square to vertical

When Instagram launched in 2010, it enforced a square image format, reviving an aesthetic that had been in decline since the 1980s. For its first five years, every photo on the platform had the same proportions, giving feeds a uniform, grid-like appearance.

That constraint gradually loosened. First came horizontal and portrait images, and more recently, a strong shift toward vertical media optimised for smartphone screens. On the account analysed, vertical orientation now dominates, accounting for more than four-fifths of posts. This reflects a wider mobile-first design logic.

The rise of video and carousels

Media types have also diversified. Instagram began as a photo-only platform, adding video three years after launch. Stories, live broadcasts, and later Reels further pushed the platform toward moving images.

One of the most significant changes has been the growth of multi-asset posts, commonly known as carousels. Introduced in 2017, carousels allow users to combine multiple images and videos in a single post. On the analysed account, carousels now make up nearly 86 per cent of all posts, replacing the once-standard single-image update.

This shift reflects both creative and strategic considerations. Carousels enable richer storytelling and are favoured by algorithms because they keep users engaged for longer.

A move toward multimodality

Early Instagram feeds were dominated by clean, carefully composed photographs. Text, when present, lived mainly in captions.

Today, text is increasingly embedded directly into images and videos. Subtitles, headline-style overlays, quote cards, and labels are now commonplace. On the analysed account, posts containing on-image text remained below 10 per cent for nearly a decade, then surged to over 80 per cent in 2025.

Posts now function as self-contained information packages, reducing the need for users to read captions at all.

Evolving user practices

As the platform's design changes, so do user behaviours. Hashtags, once placed in captions, are now often relegated to comments to avoid visual clutter while still aiding discovery.

Another notable change came in 2019, when Instagram began hiding public "like" counts in some regions to reduce performance pressure. Two years later, users were given the option to show or hide likes themselves.

These shifts highlight how platform design nudges shape social norms.

Commercialisation of the feed

Instagram has become far more commercial. The introduction of in-app shopping in 2020 blurred the line between social networking and e-commerce. Alongside this, the volume of ads, sponsored posts, and algorithmically suggested content has steadily increased.

Many users now encounter feeds where a third or more of visible posts are paid placements or recommendations. This changes the platform's role from a primarily social space to a hybrid marketplace and entertainment channel.

Algorithms and AI at the core

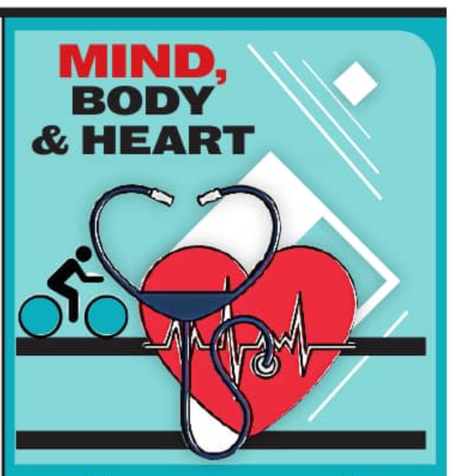
Since the introduction of the ranked feed in 2016, algorithms have played a central role in determining what users see. Instead of chronological order, content is prioritised based on predicted interest, using signals such as watch time, likes, comments, and shares.

Artificial intelligence is now embedded in search, creative tools, and experimental features such as generating images from text. These developments deepen the platform's reliance on automated systems.

What comes next

Taken together, these trends point to convergence and homogenisation. Social platforms increasingly borrow features from one another.

By TJ Thomson, RMIT University



All you need to know about...

Winter Curls

Curly and wavy hair is naturally drier because scalp oils take longer to travel down the bends of the hair shaft. In winter, cold outdoor air combined with dry indoor heating strips away even more moisture. The result? Brittle strands, frizz, tangles, breakage, and curls that lose their definition. This is why hydration, protection, and gentle handling become absolutely essential during colder months.

Deep hydration
For curls, it truly does. Winter air pulls moisture out of hair faster than any other season. Start with a nourishing pre-wash oil or mask, followed by a gentle, hydrating shampoo and a rich conditioner. Never skip leave-in products—they provide daily moisture support. Choose formulas with natural, nourishing ingredients and avoid heavy artificial fragrances that can irritate a dry winter scalp.

Deep conditioning
Deep conditioning at least once a week is non-negotiable, and twice if hair feels extra dry. It restores elasticity, softens curls, and helps maintain shape. Consider it winter armour for your curls.

Moisture sealing
Moisture needs sealing. Lock it in with a lightweight oil or rich leave-in. Refresh curls on non-wash days to revive dryness and definition.

Heat control
Heat worsens winter dryness. Limit hot tools, and if unavoidable, always replenish moisture afterward. Use the lowest heat settings possible.

Curl protection
Cold winds and friction undo hard work. Scarves, bonnets, and silk or satin fabrics protect curls, reduce moisture loss, and keep definition intact.

—Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Autism might be equally common in males and females: Study

Autism might be just as common in females as in males, according to a study published on Wednesday that counters prevailing estimates of the disorder's prevalence.

While the neurological and developmental condition is known to be more common in boys at younger ages, the study found a clear catch-up effect among adolescent girls, the researchers reported in The BMJ.

The findings highlight a need to investigate why autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed later in females than in males, they said.

The prevalence of ASD has increased over the past three decades, with three males now diagnosed for every female. Most diagnoses are made in childhood by the age of 10.

To analyse diagnosis rates over the life course, researchers in Sweden and the United States tracked 2.7 million individuals born in Sweden between 1985 and 2022, from birth to a maximum of age 37.

Overall, 2.8% of individuals were diagnosed with autism at an average age of 14.

Diagnosis rates were highest among boys at ages 10 to 14 and among girls at ages 15 to 19.

By age 20, the male to female ratio had evened out at nearly 1:1, the researchers found.

These findings and other recent research suggest "current practices are failing to recognise autism in many women until later in life, if at all," patient advocate Anne Cary wrote in an accompanying editorial.

The study did not account for genetics or environmental factors or for other conditions associated with autism, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and intellectual disability, which might have played a role in patients' diagnoses. Undiagonised autism in females link to severe mental health risks. —Reuters

 # This old thing?
Kristen Stewart buys broken down movie theater, says want to see what 'mysteries' it holds

BACK AFTER 7 YEARS

Rhea set to start off acting journey afresh with upcoming series

After staying away from films for over four years, Rhea Chakraborty is set to resume her acting journey with Hansal Mehta's upcoming series 'Family Business'. The project was officially announced as part of Netflix's slate on February 3, 2026, marking her return to scripted acting. Rhea will be seen alongside Anil Kapoor and Vijay Varma, who headline the series. Directed by Hansal Mehta, 'Family Business' brings together a strong ensemble cast and places Rhea back in the spotlight after a long hiatus from the big and small screen.

Returning to the sets after a long hiatus proved to be an emotional moment for the 'Jalebi' actor. Being back in front of the camera took Rhea Chakraborty down memory lane, reminding her of her early days in the industry when she arrived in Bombay at just 17, armed only with ambition and determination. Despite experiencing both highs and setbacks over the years, her love for acting remained constant.

Reflecting on this full-circle moment, Rhea shared a heartfelt note on Instagram, writing, "7 years have passed since I went to set... But I'm still the same girl who came to Bombay at 17 with a dream to be an actor. A part of me moved on, but a part of me stayed and waited. And I'm here, once again in my chapter2 It seems Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans (sic)." Her words struck a chord with fans, who applauded her resilience, vulnerability and courage to begin again.

Rhea also conveyed deep gratitude to director Hansal Mehta, the team behind 'Family Business', and her co-stars Anil Kapoor and Vijay Varma for standing by her during this new phase. She credited their belief in her abilities and thanked them for giving her the chance to begin her acting journey anew. **—ETimes**

Drama, mystery, suspense in haphazard narrative

Gharga
2.5 RATING ★★½☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** M Shashidhar
- **ACTORS** Arun Ramprasad, Saikumar, Sampath Raj, Rahul Dev, Sravan Raghavendra, Dev Gill
- **CERTIFICATION** U/A
- **Duration** 118 minutes

Gharga is M Shashidhar's second film as a director after Ajagrata that went on floors in May 2023. Though the director deserves a pat on the back for selecting an action and suspense thriller for his second outing, he should have ensured a crisp screenplay to make the film entertaining. Producer Ashwini Ramprasad has provided all amenities required to launch his son Arun Ramprasad as a hero. The movie is like a beautiful huge structure but has no data on how to enter and exit.

It is filled with actors, but the roles are so shallow that it is not clear why they appear and disappear from the screen. The movie has two music directors – Guru Kiran and RP Patnaik. Songs are, especially Bangaari Yaare Nee Bulbul, aimed at mass audiences but the background score is too loud and does not serve the purpose.

The movie is about a mysterious village Gharga where strangers appear and disappear and locals narrate strange stories. The movie begins with a vicious person (Sampath Raj) narrating the background of Gharga and how Vikram Adiga (Arun Ramprasad), a writer, along with a car driver (Arun Sagar) embarks on a journey to Gharga to meet Gajanan Aithal (Saikumar) to know more about latter's father Mahabala Aithal. Gajanana Aithal allows Vikram Adiga and the cab driver to stay at his house. At this juncture, audiences are told that Vikram Adiga is Aryan, a born criminal, who is on a mission to get a precious idol. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Gajanana Aithal and whether or not Vikram Adiga aka Aryan succeeds in his mission.

The movie was in the making for quite a long time. Arun Ramprasad, who debuts as a hero, has tried his best. Saikumar, Mithra, Rihana Sheik, and Sampath Raj provide good support. Arun Sagar has done a neat job. His dialogue delivery is very good but some of the horror and comedy scenes are incongruous.

The movie ends with an announcement – to be continued – indicating a sequel.

Horror film aficionados may want to check this film out. **—Y Maheswara Reddy**

A memory you will wish you could forget

Nenapugala Maathu Madhura
1.5 RATING ★½☆☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** Afzal
- **ACTORS** Afzal, Seven Raj, Ranveer K, Rajprabhu M, Vasishta Bantanur, Vijay Kumar M, Anjali Choto
- **CERTIFICATION** A
- **Duration** 117 minutes

The movie begins with a young man planning to organise a cocktail party at a resort for three friends. They decide to share their sweet memories. Abhi, one of the four, narrates how he had borrowed money from Kuberappa (Seven Raj), a lecherous money lender, and how his marriage got cancelled after the prospective bride eloped with her boyfriend. He also narrates how he managed to keep Kuberappa happy with the help of a sex worker. Another person narrates how he happened to meet a young woman while working as a gig worker and how she got murdered by someone. The other one narrates how he was compelled to spend a night with another girl. You have to watch the movie to know what happened to Kuberappa and what message the movie intends to convey to youths.

As far as the quality of the movie is concerned, there is nothing to crow about. It looks like a platform for a few amateurish actors to spend their leisure time. It is not clear why Seven Raj, who not only played a moneylender role but also supported this movie, spent his hard-earned money and time. Afzal, who plays a key role in the film apart from handling the megaphone, looks tired throughout the movie. Seven Raj is not even able to deliver dialogues.

The film seems to portray all men and women do is roam around or make out. The movie has one horror scene where the departed soul appears and rides a scooter and invites a stranger to spend time with him.

It is worth a watch for those who have no other options to kill time.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

This can be problematic

Veteran actor Zeenat Aman has spoken against the culture of eve-teasing and sl*t shaming that long existed in Hindi cinema. Reflecting on her work in classics like 'Dostana' and 'Teesri Aankh', the Zennath said women were often framed through problematic narrative lenses.

Sharing her thoughts on Instagram, Zeenat wrote, "Rewatching scenes from my old movies is a delightfully unpredictable process." She recalled being "eve-teased and slut shamed" by Amitabh Bachchan's character in 'Dostana', while noting the contrast in 'Teesri Aankh', where her character Barkha becomes the aggressor opposite Dharmendra.

Questioning whether cinema truly evolved in the short gap between the two films, she remarked, "It's doubtful," adding that while the role reversal was interesting, it wasn't necessarily progressive. "Dharmji's Ashok is naive and imposed upon, while my Barkha is roguish and completely inappropriate," she explained. Zeenat admitted that Bollywood often crossed the line while portraying romance. "Too many of our films glorify obsession and limerence," she said, instead of showing emotionally healthy relationships. **—ETimes**

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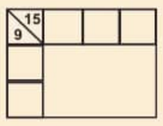
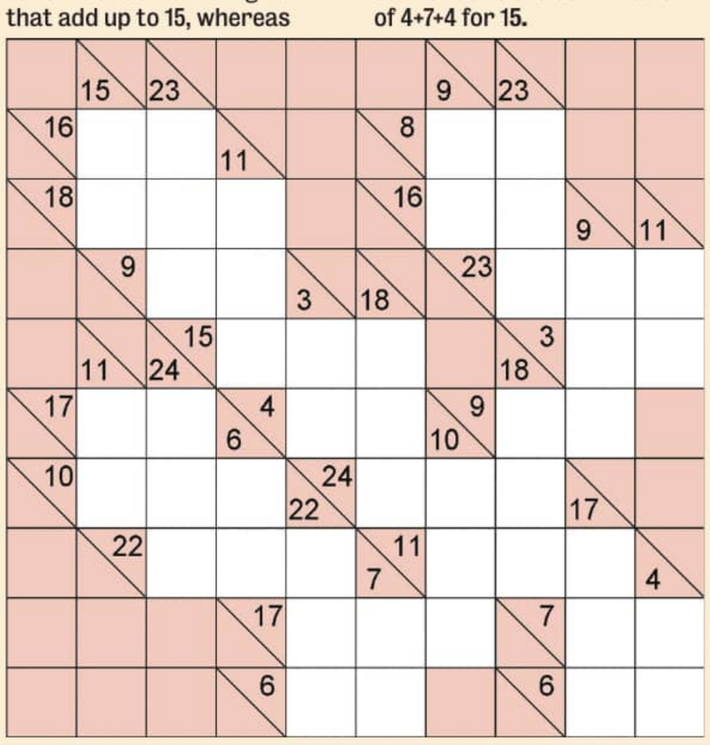
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

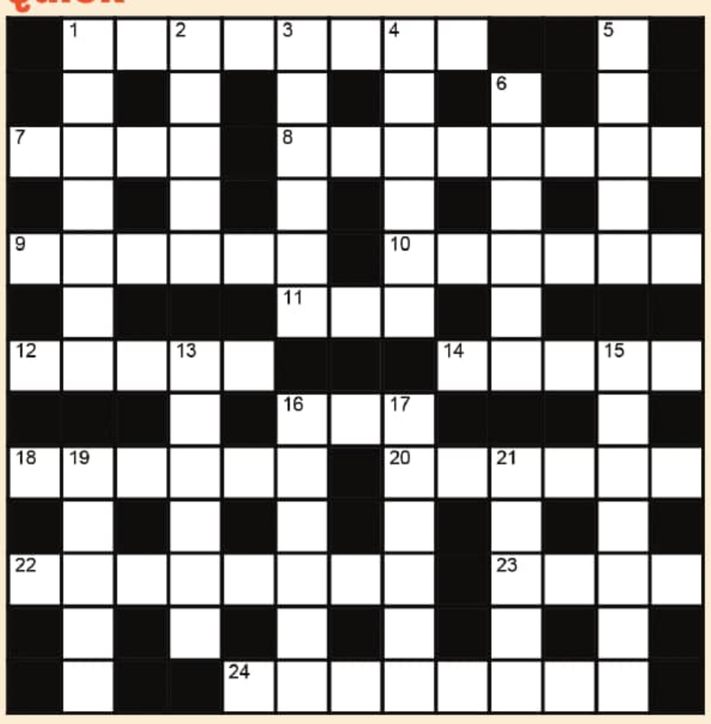
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Interfering types? (8)
7 Tiny amount (4)
8 Filled with a sense of the presence of divinity; holy (8)
9 Cricket shot (6)
10 Clear or transparent (6)
11 Owed (3)
12 Quite content (5)
14 Bone prefix (5)
16 Chartered accountants in short (3)
18 Make harmonious? (6)
20 Former Sri Lankan batsman Atapattu (6)
22 Persevere (4,2,2)
23 Shout (4)
24 Converted waste material into re-usable form (8)

DOWN

1 M in M G Road (7)
2 Same again (5)
3 Cut open as surgeon did a boil (6)
4 Roam freely (6)
5 Muslim nymph (5)
6 Hostile spirit (6)
13 Fattens up? (6)
15 Made possible (7)
16 Middle point (6)
17 Forge (6)
19 Drift of events (5)
21 Most high-born (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Q EQUALS Y

QPB DXJJPW DVAXWA AHFAVNAJDA. QPB ZBGW BJEAVLP NW.

Linemaro

You must be Australian, because you meet all my koalafications

Mindchow

When the sword of rebellion is drawn, the sheath must be thrown away

Joke of the day

It is a sobering thought, that when Mozart was my age, he had been dead for two years

Loop

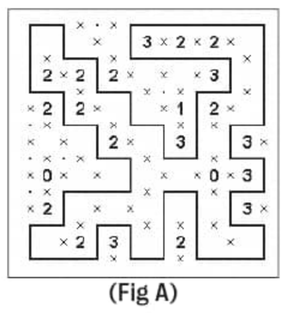
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

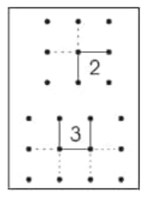
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

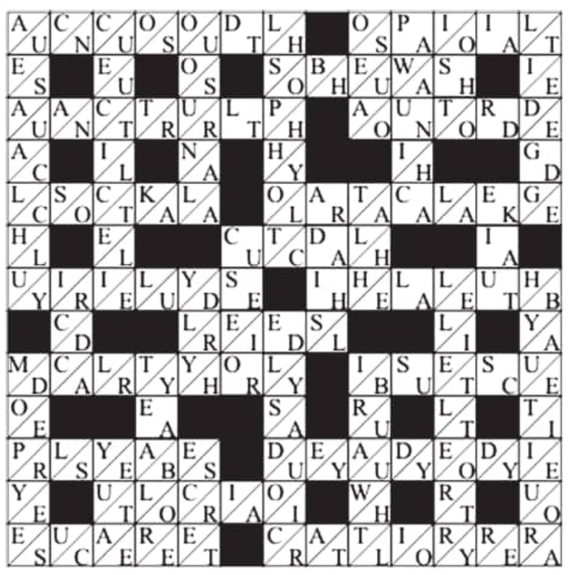


(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed

Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3 C	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

1 Acts T; 6 Loner; 7 Spine; 8 Mud it; 9 Scale

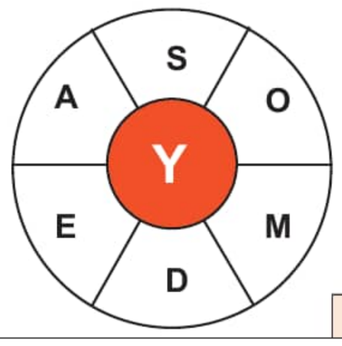
DOWN

1 State; 2 Nu Lan; 3 Mr Ice; 4 Optic; 5 Delss

Mensapuzzle

Which number goes at the bottom to start the sequence?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

02 Average; 03 Good; 04 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

9			8		4			6
8			1	2	6			7
		2		3		5		
	5						4	
		4				6		
	7						3	
		1		4		9		
3			7	8	1			5
7			5		3			4

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 14

1 3 5 7

Medium = 2

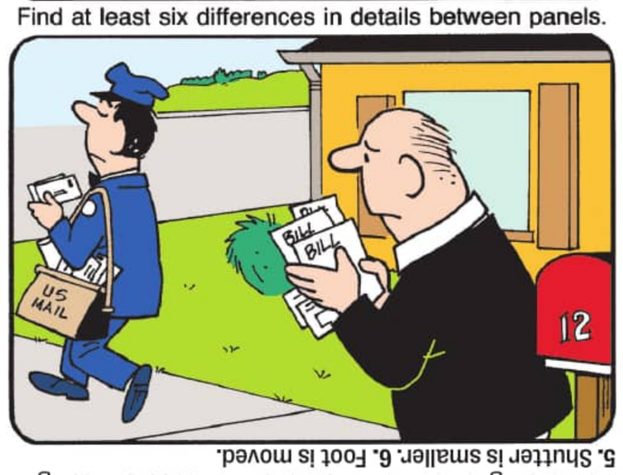
3 3 7 8

Hard = 3

2 3 5 6

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



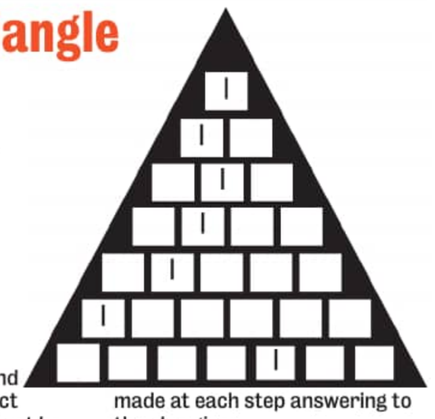
Differences: 1. Number on mailbox is lower. 2. Patch on sleeve is higher. 3. Thumb is moved. 4. House is missing. 5. Shutter is smaller. 6. Foot is moved.

Riddler

Construction of a stronger and more massive bell tower for the monastery to replace the one destroyed during the last civil strife with a neighboring lord was well underway when the old Monk visited the site. The Abbot showed the Monk the drawings and model for the three-bell tower. The Monk was impressed until he stood where the bell chamber would be and saw the spiral staircase in this medieval bell tower running the wrong direction (counter-clockwise). "The staircase direction must be changed," said the Old Monk. The Abbot looked at the staircase and agreed. Why?

Alpha triangle

1 Third vowel
2 Not out
3 Hr fraction.
4 Go for the gold?
5 Hash; dice
6 Cashflow factor
7 Blend

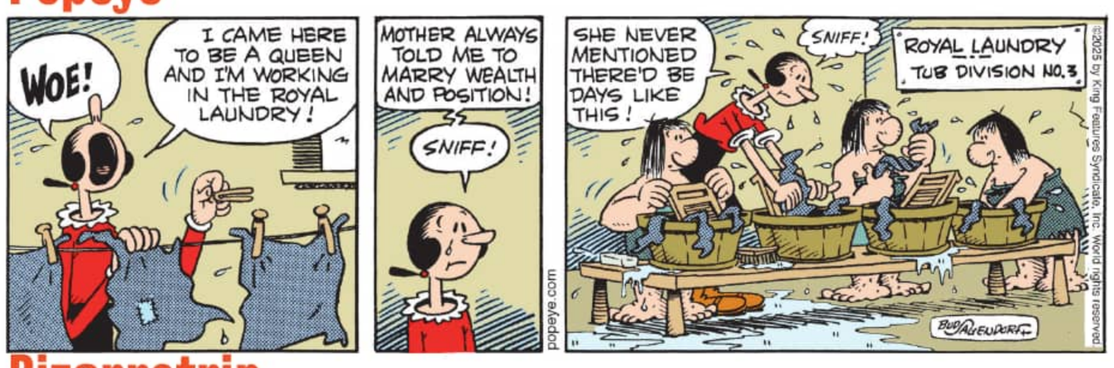


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


WOE!
I CAME HERE TO BE A QUEEN AND I'M WORKING IN THE ROYAL LAUNDRY!
MOTHER ALWAYS TOLD ME TO MARRY WEALTH AND POSITION!
SNIFF!
SHE NEVER MENTIONED THERE'D BE DAYS LIKE THIS!
SNIFF!
ROYAL LAUNDRY TUB DIVISION NO.3
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popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

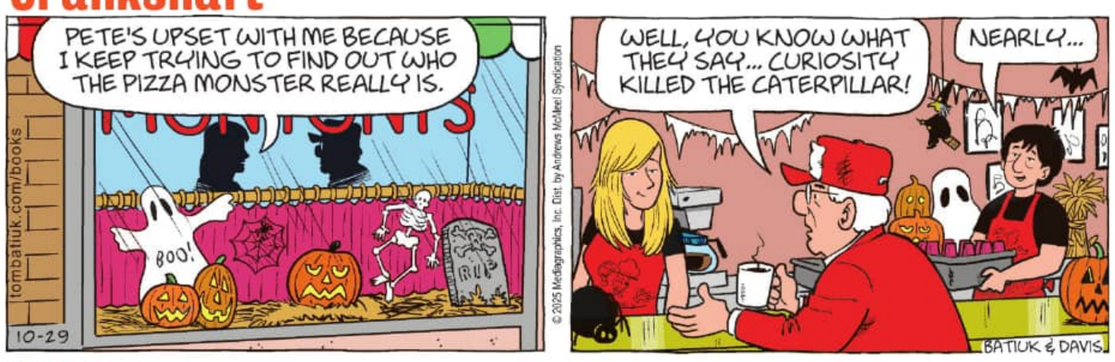
Wayno & Piraro 10·29·25
©2025 BIZARRO Studios
BIZARRO.COM
We're here because the criminal justice system has been weaponized against criminals.
Dist. by King Features

Diamond Lil

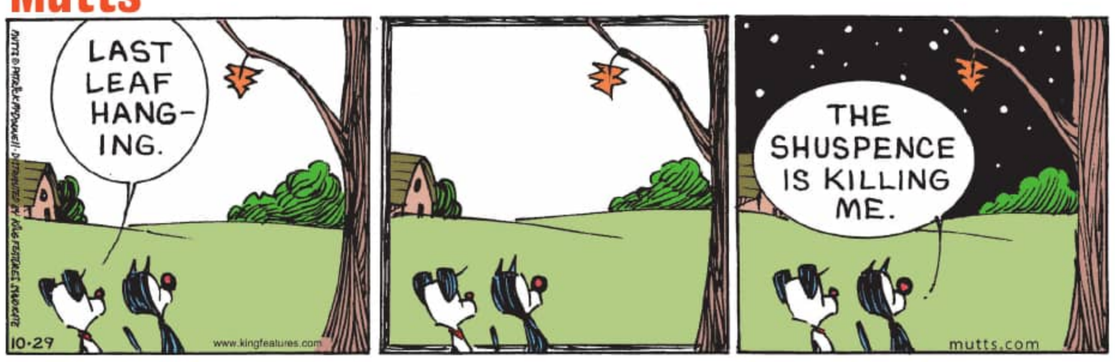
Hart of the city

JUST IGNORE THESE CHAIN LETTERS. THEY DON'T ACTUALLY DO ANYTHING TO YOU, SO DON'T ENGAGE!
BUT IT SAYS RIGHT HERE IN THE LETTER THAT IF I BREAK THE CHAIN, I'LL HAVE A BAD MONDAY. WHO EVEN SENDS THESE? HOW DO THEY KNOW IT'S MONDAY?!?
I'M NOT GOING AGAINST THE SUPERNATURAL!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@OCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY
10/29

Crankshaft


PETE'S UPSET WITH ME BECAUSE I KEEP TRYING TO FIND OUT WHO THE PIZZA MONSTER REALLY IS.
BOO!
10-29
tombatiuk.com/books
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY... CURIOSITY KILLED THE CATERPILLAR!
NEARLY...
© 2025 Mediagraphics, Inc. Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Courageous moves define your professional life this year. Love enters a passionate phase, particularly during autumn travels to coastal destinations. Home life becomes a sanctuary of creativity and warmth. Be prepared for a career shift that aligns better with your core values. Wealth builds through disciplined savings and smart real estate decisions. Nurture your friendships to sustain your spirit.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

Change is happening in all areas of your life today, possibly involving a new job or home. Stay observant and keep a keen eye on your children's health and well-being.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Your patience will be rewarded today as colleagues offer their full cooperation on your projects. Short family trips will bring joy, and meditation will help you work more efficiently with your goals.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Prioritize your family today, even if it means putting work on the back burner. You might treat yourself to something new, and positive financial news from work will arrive tonight.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Focus on building a stronger social network and planning for your creative future today. Remember to appreciate your partner and eat at home to maintain your physical comfort and health.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Your leadership on a major project today is paving the way for a future promotion. While work is busy, be very careful with your money and avoid making any new dealings.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Financial luck is on your side today, making it a great time for property investments. If you feel inclined toward religious travel nearby, go for it and enjoy the journey.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Stay inside and rest if you feel unwell today, as gains in the business sector are still flowing your way. Students should focus exclusively on their most important upcoming projects.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

New responsibilities at work will show your boss's trust in you. Any partner conflicts will be resolved, and planning your financial future today will help you build your lasting assets.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Blessings and love are in the air, especially if you are single. Your professional life is also improving significantly, making it a good day to consider investing in fine jewellery.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

A potential promotion or recognition at work will bring you much happiness today. Your prestigious reputation will help you build new social connections, while couples should enjoy some quiet re-connection.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

Though the day starts slowly, you will feel energized and struck by creativity tonight. Take a solitary walk to clear your head and consider revamping your business plans for success.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Embrace new work opportunities without hesitation today, as they will lead to growth. Students should explore new hobbies to expand their skills, and it is a lucky time for career growth.

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SOLUTIONS

RIDDLER Spiral staircases in medieval castles, towers and keeps were run clockwise. This is because all knights used to be right-handed. When the intruding army would climb the stairs they would not be able to use their right hand, which was holding the sword because of the difficulties of climbing the stairs, giving clear advantage to the defenders. Many of the orders of clergy had military training in order to defend monasteries and Abbeys during the middle ages. Left-handed knights would have had no troubles, except left-handed people could never become knights because it was assumed that they were descendants of the devil.

FAST FIVE

T	A	C	T	S
E	N	R	O	L
S	N	I	P	E
T	U	M	I	D
A	L	E	C	S

STRIKE OUT

U	N	C	O	U	T	H		S	P	O	I	L		
S		U		S		O	B	E	A	H		I		
U	N	T	R	U	T	H		A	N	O	D	E		
A		I		A		H		I		G				
L	O	C	A	L		O	A	T	C	A	K	E		
L		L		U		T	A	H		I				
Y	I	E	L	D	S		H	E	A	L	T	H		
	D			R	E	D	S		I			A		
M	A	R	T	Y	R	Y		B	U	T	S	U		
O		A		R		T		T				T		
P	L	E	B	E		D	E	A	D	E	Y	E		
E		T	O	R	I	I		W		R		U		
S	C	A	R	E		C	A	L	O	Y	E	R		

QUICK

												D		
												N		
K	E	E	P	A	T	I	T		Y	E	L	L		
		R		M		N		I		O		B		
A	T	T	U	N	E		M	A	R	V	A	N		
		L		C	A	S						N		
H	A	P	P	Y				O	S	T	E	O		
		M				D	U	E						
S	T	R	O	K	E		L	I	M	P	I	D		
	A		T		C		B		I		R			
W	H	I	T		N	U	M	I	N	O	U	S		
	A		I		A		A		A		O			
M	E	D	D	L	E	R	S		H					

SUDOKU

9	1	7	8	5	4	3	2	6
8	3	5	1	2	6	4	9	7
4	6	2	9	3	7	5	8	1
6	5	3	2	1	9	7	4	8
1	9	4	3	7	8	6	5	2
2	7	8	4	6	5	1	3	9
5	8	1	6	4	2	9	7	3
3	4	9	7	8	1	2	6	5
7	2	6	5	9	3	8	1	4

MENSA PUZZLE

21. Numbers increase down the row by 5, then 4, 3, etc.

QUOTE UNCODE You cannot create experience. You must undergo it.

BULL'S EYE SOMEDAY easy, mosey, seamy.

SOLVE IN 1M

(0.04)^-(3/2) = 1/0.2^3 = 1/0.008 = 125

ALPHA TRIANGLE

I, In, Min, Mine, Mince, Income, Combine.

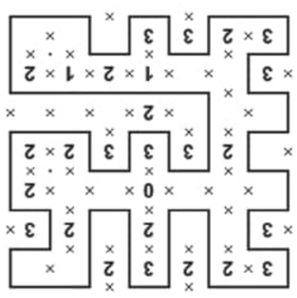
GO FIGURE

Easy
7 + 3 + 5 - 1=14

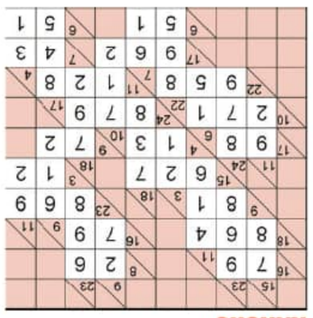
Medium
8 + 3 + 3 / 7=2

Hard
5 - 2 x 3 - 6=3

LOOP



KAKURO



Volume No 19, Issue No 006 RNI NO:KARENG/2007/22411 Published for the Proprietors, Metropolitan Media Company Ltd by Lokesh K.V. at No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011 and printed by him at Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., The Times of India Press, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, KIADB Bommasandra Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore-560 099 (Phones : Press : 080-22899999; Editorial : 080-40877666, Registered Office: No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011, Email : mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com Editor : Ms. Seena Menon-responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of the Publisher is prohibited.

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100 DAYS.

100% OFF
ON MAKING CHARGES*

BHIMA

LEGACY FEST
100 DAYS OFFER

UP TO
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